



Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Strategic Plan (2000 – 2005)

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Mission

The mission of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is to protect America's animal and plant resources by:

- Safeguarding resources from exotic invasive pests and diseases,
- Monitoring and managing agricultural pests and diseases existing in the United States,
- Resolving and managing trade issues related to animal or plant health, and
- Ensuring the humane care and treatment of animals.

The APHIS mission is an integral part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) efforts to provide the Nation with safe and affordable food. Without APHIS protecting America's animal and plant resources from agricultural pests and diseases, threats to our food supply would be quite significant. For example, if Mediterranean fruit fly and foot-and-mouth disease—two major agricultural health threats—were left unchecked by APHIS, production and marketing losses of several billions of dollars would occur annually in this country.

In recent years, the scope of APHIS' protection function has expanded beyond pest and disease management. Because of its technical expertise in assessing and regulating the risks associated with agricultural imports, APHIS has assumed a new commercial protection role. Now the agency must respond to other countries' animal and plant health import requirements and negotiate science-based standards that ensure America's agricultural exports, worth over \$50 billion annually, are protected from unjustified trade restrictions. In response to needs expressed by the American people and Congress, APHIS' protection role also includes wildlife damage management, the welfare of animals, human health and safety, and ecosystems vulnerable to invasive pests and pathogens. In carrying out its diverse protection responsibilities, APHIS makes every effort to address the needs of all those involved in the US agricultural sector, including small farms.

Congress has passed several laws that give APHIS the authority to implement its protection mission.¹ More than 6,000 APHIS employees, administered under USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs mission area, work across the country and in many foreign countries to carry out these laws. APHIS' employees are organized into five main operational divisions: Animal Care, International Services, Plant Protection and Quarantine, Veterinary Services, and Wildlife Services. Three management support groups—Legislative and Public Affairs, Policy and Program Development, and Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services—provide communications tools, decision support, and management systems to help all the operational units.² In fiscal year 2000, APHIS operated with \$437.8 million appropriated by Congress and over \$200 million in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) transfers to address pest and disease emergencies. APHIS leverages these resources by collaborating as much as possible with many other organizations that have a stake in achieving the agency's mission.³

Because pests and diseases affect all living things—including humans, agricultural products, and natural resources such as forests and wildlife—what APHIS does is important for every American to understand. This updated strategic plan lays out the agency's direction for the next 5 years, 2000–2005.




APHIS' Goals

APHIS organizes and plans its work around five strategic goals and an organizational management goal. These all support four of USDA's main goals: expand economic and trade opportunities for U.S. agricultural producers; promote health by providing access to safe, affordable and nutritious food; maintain and enhance the Nation's natural resources and environment; and operate an efficient, effective, and discrimination-free organization. APHIS has developed a number of strategies that will lead to achieving its goals. Congress enables APHIS to implement these strategies by funding program "line items" in the USDA budget and authorizing the use of trust fund and cooperative service agreements.

Goal 1: Safeguard U.S. animal and plant resources against introductions of exotic invasive pests and diseases, while meeting international trade obligations.

Strategies to Achieve the Goal	Associated Programs
Help identify, control, or eradicate exotic agricultural health threats where they originate—outside the United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection (AQI)• Aquaculture• Cattle Ticks• Foreign Animal Diseases• Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection• Import/Export• International Preclearance• Pest Detection• Regulatory Enforcement• Screwworm• Trade Issue Resolution Management (Sanitary/Phytopsanitary Management)• Tropical Bont Tick
Ensure a high rate of compliance with APHIS quarantine regulations and identify and monitor potential entry routes (pathways) at or near U.S. borders.	
Foster a trade environment that allows for a common understanding of international agricultural health standards, a free flow of risk-assessment information, and quick resolution of technical trade barrier issues.	



Performance Measures: *APHIS tracks its performance in achieving this goal by monitoring:*

- Specific pest threats to U.S. agriculture eradicated or controlled in foreign countries
- Threat of agricultural pests and diseases approaching U.S. borders
- Number of exotic pest and disease outbreaks in the United States
- Number and economic impact of animal or plant health trade barrier issues resolved




Goal 2: Minimize agricultural production losses and export market disruptions by quickly detecting and responding to new invasive agricultural pests and diseases or other emerging agricultural health situations.

Strategies to Achieve the Goal	Associated Programs
APHIS strategies to achieve this goal revolve around a cooperative relationship with States, academia, animal and plant industry stakeholders, and international organizations to:	
Quickly detect new invasive pests and diseases and communicate the detection information to decisionmakers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection• Animal Health Monitoring and Surveillance• Foreign Animal Diseases• Fruit Fly Exclusion and Detection• National Animal Health Emergency Management System• Pest Detection• Regulatory Enforcement• Screwworm• Veterinary Diagnostics• Wildlife Services Operations
Partner with States and industry stakeholders to develop an appropriate, measured response capability for outbreaks of invasive pests and diseases in the United States.	
<div></div> <p>Performance Measures: <i>APHIS tracks its performance in achieving this goal by monitoring:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Severity of exotic pest and disease incidents in the United States➤ Emergency response capability for outbreaks of invasive agricultural pests and diseases	



Goal 3: Minimize risks to agricultural production, natural resources, and human health and safety by effectively managing existing agricultural pests and diseases and wildlife damage in the United States.

Strategies to Achieve the Goal	Associated Programs
Conduct cooperative programs for control or eradication of ongoing regional and national agricultural health problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aquaculture• Biological Control• Boll Weevil• Brucellosis Eradication• Emerging Plant Pests• Golden Nematode• Gypsy Moth• Noxious Weeds• Pink Bollworm• Pseudorabies• Scrapie• Tuberculosis• Witchweed• Wildlife Services Operations
Provide Federal leadership in managing problems caused by wildlife—to reduce damage caused by wildlife to the lowest possible levels, while, at the same time, reducing wildlife mortality.	




Performance Measures: *APHIS tracks its performance in achieving this goal by monitoring:*

- Progress in managing the spread of selected agricultural pests and diseases
- Agricultural resources, natural resources, human health and safety, and property protected from wildlife damage



Goal 4: Ensure the humane care and treatment of animals covered under the Animal Welfare Act and various laws protecting horses.

Strategies to Achieve the Goal	Associated Programs
Establish welfare standards for the humane care and treatment of animals used for research or exhibition purposes, sold as pets at the wholesale level, or transported by common carrier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal Health Monitoring & Surveillance• Animal Welfare• Horse Protection• Regulatory Enforcement
Carry out inspections to ensure high levels of compliance with the humane care and treatment standards under relevant laws.	
Establish and monitor compliance with standards protecting horses being exhibited in shows or transported to slaughter.	
Educate regulated entities and individuals to encourage compliance with animal welfare regulations.	




Performance Measures: *APHIS tracks its performance in achieving this goal by monitoring:*

- Percentage of facilities that are in compliance with animal welfare regulations
- Percentage of inspected horses that exhibit signs of soring on the forelegs




Goal 5: Develop and apply scientific methods that benefit agricultural producers and consumers, protect the health of American animal and plant resources, and sustain agricultural ecosystems.

Strategies to Achieve the Goal	Associated Programs
<i>APHIS has established laboratories and applied science and technology centers to achieve this goal and to help achieve the other APHIS goals.</i> <i>The science centers:</i>	
Provide new tools and technologies to safeguard animal and plant health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biotechnology/Environmental Protection• Plant Methods Development• Veterinary Biologics• Veterinary Diagnostics• Wildlife Services Methods Development
Provide diagnostic services, products and training to support animal disease surveillance, prevention, control, and eradication programs.	
Provide new tools and technologies to improve wildlife damage management.	
Facilitate, monitor, and regulate environmentally responsible development of biotechnology-derived products, for the benefit of agricultural producers and consumers.	
Protect animal health by ensuring the purity, potency, safety, and efficacy of veterinary biological products.	
Comply with environmental analysis and reporting requirements and institutionalize a solid environmental ethic in APHIS programs.	
<div></div> <p>Performance Measures: <i>APHIS tracks its performance in achieving this goal by monitoring:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ New or improved methods and technologies developed or used by APHIS laboratories to aid in detection or management of pests, diseases, and wildlife damage➤ Safe testing and movement of biotechnology products➤ Purity, potency, safety, and efficacy of veterinary biologics	

**Goal 6:** Serve the public effectively and efficiently.

APHIS will support several USDA management strategies to help achieve the Departmentwide goal of improving management operations.

Management Strategies	Associated Management Support Units and Programs
Provide customers and regulated entities with convenient, timely service with less cost and paperwork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• APHIS Health and Safety Committee• Civil Rights Enforcement and Compliance• Employee Assistance Program• Office of Information Technology Services• Integrated Systems Acquisition Project• Legislative and Public Affairs• Marketing and Regulatory Programs–Business Services• Policy and Program Development• Small Farms Initiative
Ensure effective and efficient management and support of human resources.	
Ensure that APHIS policies, practices, and programs provide fair and equitable service and enforce the civil rights of all employees and customers, including small farmers and ranchers.	
Provide effective and efficient management of capital assets.	
Improve financial management and reporting.	
Maintain high standards for the management of information technology (IT) by utilizing best practices and innovative solutions.	
<div></div> <p>Performance Measures: <i>APHIS tracks its performance in achieving this goal by monitoring:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ American Customer Satisfaction Index and other customer satisfaction survey scores for selected APHIS programs➤ Office of Personnel Management's Organizational Assessment Survey scores of employee satisfaction➤ Percentage of employees receiving mandatory annual civil rights training➤ Successful implementation of USDA's new Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS)➤ Successful implementation of new information technology projects in APHIS	



Key External Factors Affecting Agency Strategy

APHIS has taken into account a wide range of external factors in developing strategies for accomplishing its mission. The agency's accomplishments over the next 5 years will to a large extent be determined by how well it manages the following three factors:

- 1. Emerging animal and plant health issues, and their real or perceived impacts on public health and American economic interests, will require increasingly sophisticated and appropriate scientific expertise.**

Outbreaks of foreign pests and diseases such as citrus canker, Asian longhorned beetle, and West Nile virus can be addressed only by understanding the biology underlying these outbreaks. New emergency management responsibilities, threats from bioterrorism, and pressures against use of biotechnology-derived products require new decision models based on assessment of risk. APHIS must develop and use the latest scientific methods and technologies and work closely with scientists around the world to anticipate and understand the nature of emerging health threats to agriculture, wildlife, and people.

- 2. "Globalization" will continue to challenge APHIS' capacity to carry out its mission.**

Implementing and complying with new rules of trade (for example, scientific risk assessments, equivalency, transparency, regionalization, and dispute settlement) create new responsibilities and demands for services that threaten to outstrip APHIS' current resources. Improved transportation technologies increase the movement of animal and plant pests and diseases. Dramatic increases in international travel, trade, and containerized cargo make total reliance on traditional inspection procedures impractical. APHIS must continue to update detection methods, prevention strategies, monitoring systems, and response actions.

- 3. American society's expectations of the Federal Government and APHIS' role create many management challenges.**

Demands for APHIS services continue to rise. Interest groups are applying increased public pressure for APHIS to become involved in new issues beyond the scope of its traditional mandate. For example, the agency is now being asked to address general animal welfare issues (beyond those authorized by current legislation) and to develop nonlethal wildlife control methods, as more people move into rural areas. At the same time, Americans are looking for a balance between pragmatic solutions to problems and the protection of the environment and the welfare of animals. APHIS will continue to update strategies and methods to ensure that programs are practical, timely, environmentally sound, humane, and socially acceptable.

The Internet and other advanced communication technologies have increased the public's expectations for information. Everyone demands quick access to information about APHIS' services, technical assistance, and regulations. At the same time, there is a growing distance between the general public and the agriculture community. As our society moves further away from its agrarian roots, there is a corresponding decrease in the understanding of, and appreciation for, the basic APHIS mission of protecting and promoting animal and plant health. Education and public awareness become increasingly important as APHIS builds support for its programs.



Program Evaluation

Program Evaluation

Strategic planning in APHIS is part of the agency's annual cycle of program planning and budgeting, development and revision of mission-related regulations, and program evaluation. Each operational unit in APHIS has its own set of ongoing evaluation activities to identify strengths and weaknesses, determine whether programs are having intended results, and develop new performance goals and strategies. These evaluations include post and program reviews, station and port reviews, customer and stakeholder needs assessments, analysis of public comments on proposed rulemaking, and results of public hearings, meetings and symposia on current scientific issues. One of APHIS' most important recent evaluations, the stakeholder review "Safeguarding American Plant Resources," has been used extensively in the revision of this strategic plan.

In the next 5 years, APHIS intends to evaluate each of its five strategic goals regularly, with participation or input from external customers and stakeholders. Some of the more noteworthy program evaluations already being planned include

- An analysis of recommendations received from the stakeholder review, "Safeguarding American Plant Resources"
- A review of APHIS' animal health safeguarding function
- Followup evaluations of pest eradication programs in Central America
- Evaluation of problems concerning transportation of animals and related animal welfare topics
- The American Customer Satisfaction Survey, an agencywide evaluation tool to monitor levels of public satisfaction with APHIS programs

In its annual performance plan, required by the Government Performance and Results Act, APHIS will use the performance measures listed in this strategic plan to define the level of performance of its program activities and to establish annual performance targets.⁴ APHIS' annual performance report is an evaluation of whether the agency achieved those performance targets.



¹ APHIS' principal legislative authorities include the Organic Act of 1944, the Plant Protection Act (as contained in the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000), Sections 12-14 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Bureau of Animal Industry Act of 1884, the Tariff Act of 1930, the Animal Damage Control Act of 1931, the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, the Horse Protection Act of 1970, and the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act of 1913. Several laws authorize the collection of user fees for agricultural quarantine inspection and other APHIS services. The APHIS Internet sites www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/authority.html and www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad provide a complete listing of APHIS regulatory authorities.

² For a detailed description of the APHIS organizational infrastructure, visit the Internet site www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/orgchart.html.

³ APHIS collaborates with hundreds of Federal, State, international, and nongovernmental organizations to carry out its mission. A few of the key organizations are listed below. For a better idea about the full range of collaborating organizations, visit the individual websites of APHIS' programs from the agency's homepage at www.aphis.usda.gov.

USDA agencies

Agricultural Marketing Service
Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration
Foreign Agricultural Service
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Agricultural Research Service
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
Forest Service
National Agricultural Statistics Services

Other Federal, State, and international organizations

U.S. Customs Service
Immigration and Naturalization Service
Food and Drug Administration
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
Department of State
Environmental Protection Agency
National Institutes of Health
Department of Transportation (Federal Aviation Administration)
Department of Defense
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Department of the Interior
Department of Commerce
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Plant Board
United States Animal Health Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal and plant health regulatory officials in all states and most countries
International Office of Epizootics
International Plant Protection Convention
North American Plant Protection Organization

⁴ For a table describing how the agency's long-term strategic goals are linked to annual performance planning, view the Internet site www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd. Click on the "Planning, Evaluation, and Monitoring" button and then click on "Strategic Plan/Annual Performance Plan Matrix".